

BUT THOSE "KING JAMES MEN" MAKE MISTAKES: STRAINING AT GNATS AND SWALLOWING CAMELS

Updated February 14, 2005 (first published March 22, 1996) (David Cloud, Fundamental Baptist Information Service, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061, 866-295-4143, fbns@wayoflife.org; for instructions about subscribing and unsubscribing or changing addresses, see the information paragraph at the end of the article) -

I received a letter in 1996 from a fundamental Baptist seminary professor. After listing what he alleged were six errors in a book written by a well-known King James Bible defender, he said: "I am afraid that truth is no longer the chief aim of many TR/KJV defenders. If this is so, I'm sure you will agree that it is the wrong procedure."

One often hears this accusation, and my reply is as follows:

1. Many of the alleged errors that are proposed by critics of King James Bible defenders are errors only in the eye of the critic. Even before I could give careful attention to all six of the aforementioned alleged errors, I could see immediately that at least one of these supposed errors was nothing of the sort.
2. Admittedly, King James defenders do make mistakes. I certainly make mistakes. I have had to correct many things in my writings through the years. The most prominent of modern textual critics make mistakes by their own admissions. Their books, too, contain lists of "errata" in which they correct mistakes made in earlier editions. Consider Bruce Metzger, for example. In the 3rd edition of his book *The Text of the New Testament*, he admitted that he had been wrong in stating in the earlier editions that Erasmus had promised to include 1 John 5:7 if one Greek manuscript were found that contained it. "What is said on p. 101 above about Erasmus' promise to include the Comma Johanneum if one Greek manuscript were found that contained it, and his subsequent suspicion that MS 61 was written expressly to force him to do so, NEEDS TO BE CORRECTED in the light of the research of H. J. DeJonge, a specialist in Erasmusian studies who finds no explicit evidence that supports this frequently made assertion" (Metzger, *The Text of The New Testament*, 3rd Edition, p 291, footnote 2). The problem is that this serious error continues to be paraded as truth by modern version defenders.

The professors of fundamentalist seminaries also make mistakes.

In fact, every modern version defender makes mistakes, as does every KJV defender. It is the nature of man to be imperfect.

3. At the same time, I regret to say that it is true that the writings of some King James defenders contain an inordinate number of mistakes. It is one thing to be prone to make a mistake, which is the lot of mankind as a whole; it is another thing to be so careless that one's writings are filled with mistakes, and so carnal that one is not open to correction. I have found that some men are not interested in the truth so much as in promoting their position. I have written to some King James defenders in an attempt to point out mistakes and either have been completely ignored or have been treated with great disrespect.

I must hasten to say that the same thing can be said for those who defend the modern versions. Books such as *From the Mind of God to the Mind of Man* edited by J.B. Williams (1999), *One Bible Only: Examining Exclusive Claims for the King James Bible* by Roy Beacham and Kevin Bauder (2001), *Bible Preservation and the Providence of God* by Sam Schnaiter and Ron Tagliapietra (2002), and *God's Word in Our Hands: The Bible Preserved for Us* edited by J.B. Williams (2003) are literally filled with mistakes and though men of God have pointed out these errors in published critiques, there is no evidence that the authors are listening. Second editions have perpetrated the same mistakes. The authors of these books have demonstrated that they are not interested in anything other than promoting their opinions and discrediting the defense of the King James Bible.

4. The subject of Bible texts and versions is complicated. It comprehends multitudes of foreign languages, ancient manuscripts, two thousand years of church history, Satanic deception, obscure theories, world missions, the age-old warfare between God and Satan. It is very easy to make a mistake when dealing with these matters.

5. God's truth has always been held largely among the common people, among those of the less educated segments of society (Mat. 11:25; 1 Cor. 1:26-28). The apostles, for the most part, were not brilliant scholars. They were ordinary men, and we can be assured that as such they tended to make mistakes when speaking and writing apart from divine inspiration. Their enemies looked down upon them as "unlearned and ignorant men" (Acts 4:13). Most God-called pastors are ordinary men. Pastors must have a firm grasp of the Bible and of apostolic truth, and they must have a high degree of practical, Spirit-taught wisdom, but they are not usually "scholars." In fact, God's qualifications do not call for extraordinary scholarship (1 Tim. 3). Pastors make mistakes. They tend to pass on things that they get from someone else without always checking it, things that might not be completely accurate. Did God make a mistake in choosing ordinary men to pastor his churches?

One of the New Evangelical's chief errors is his lust for intellectual respectability. I believe many fundamental Baptist schools are filled with teachers who are New Evangelical at heart in this matter. They love the titles; they love the prestige. They become puffed up. They become blind to their own humanity. They focus on man rather than on God, man's uninspired writings more than the inspired Scripture. They judge everything on the basis of ivory tower scholarship. That is not where the truth is found.

"For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence" (1 Corinthians 1:26-29).

David Otis Fuller, who was a graduate of Princeton and no stranger to scholarship, described this pitfall as "scholarolatry."

6. A mistake in a man's writing or sermon does not of itself discredit the man's position. It depends on the nature of the mistake and whether that mistake undermines the heart of his argument. Jesus

warned of “straining at gnats and swallowing camels.” Defenders of the modern versions have often been guilty of this. They strain at the gnat of Erasmus, who was admittedly weak in the faith but was also an exception in the field of the Received Text, and swallow the camel of the fact that theological modernism, skepticism, and unitarianism is the rule among the fathers of modern textual criticism. They strain at the gnat of David Otis Fuller’s use of some of Benjamin Wilkinson’s writings, and swallow the camel of modern textual criticism’s blatant denial of divine preservation. They strain at the gnat of the extremely minor revisions of the KJV, and swallow the camel of the dramatic doctrinal issues associated with the Alexandrian text. They strain at the gnat of Peter Ruckman’s peculiarities, and swallow the camel of the 400 years of reasonable, godly defense of the Received Text and the King James Bible (as documented in *For Love of the Bible*). They strain at the gnat of the mistakes and foibles of defenders of the King James Bible, and swallow the blatant heresies of modern textual criticism, such as the heresy of a historical recension whereby the original text of Scripture was replaced in the 4th century with a corrupt one and the original text was not recovered until 1,500 years later.

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